

23 August 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: A Program for Application of New
Analytical Methods to Political
Research

1. The Agency has been exploring, testing, and applying certain new analytical methods and techniques which, as developed in academic and experimental research projects, appear promising to the practical needs of political analysis and policy support. There are, for example, a number of innovative ways of attacking questions of organizational behavior and decision-making -- of which personality examination, elite analysis, and national character research are in the forefront. There are new attempts to apply probability theory, new uses of simulated gaming techniques, and new efforts at role playing. There is new emphasis on relatively simple mathematically-manipulatable models for the examination of the cross-effects

of dominant variables in complex problems. And there is the construction of much more complicated models for a wide range of predictive purposes.

2. To date, much of the Agency effort in examining such matters has taken place in the DDS&T, particularly in OSI and ORD. Other activity of interest has been underway for some time in a number of individual units in OER, OSR, CRS, the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Training, ONE, OCI, the IC Staff, and others. Also, experiments with certain of the new techniques (e.g., Bayesian theory) have been conducted so as to cut across a number of offices. Yet all this represents only a start; there still exists hesitance in some offices that new methodologies have much to offer concerning certain analytic questions where available data are likely to remain thin.

3. Clearly there is merit in a more ambitious and systematic program for experimenting with the new methods. Necessarily such a planning program will involve trial and error; care and selectivity will be required to emphasize the trial and to limit the error. The new methodologies must not be regarded as a panacea; many of the most challenging and important intelligence problems will still be most effectively tackled by proven analytical techniques, together with improvement of data bases through additional and better-directed collection. In short, we should move with discrimination as we

increase our reliance on the utility of new techniques for political research and analysis.

4. In line with the aims described above, here are a series of specific recommendations:

a. Continue the new methodologies' activities of OSI and ORD on a priority basis.

b. Establish, in the new OPR, an analytical techniques staff directly subordinate to D/OPR to design and develop analytical projects to which new techniques, which have been carefully considered and are found to be promising, can be applied. This staff will provide important leverage for overcoming such hesitance as may be present in other analytical components; it will also serve as a focal point for undertaking interdisciplinary projects and approaches which will involve other analytical offices.

c. Move ahead briskly with the various joint new methods projects, already in process, involving ORD and various elements of the analytical offices

d. Design certain pilot projects on the concept that carefully-selected outside contractors will do at least the initial work;

look to the hiring of additional new-methods consultants; expand and refine the attention which the Office of Training is giving to such work.

e. Give particular attention in the hiring of new professionals for O/PR and other analytical offices to those whose background includes experience in these techniques, along with the regular strong credentials. Try, to the degree feasible, to find combinations of area speciality and such disciplines as anthropology, sociology, social psychology, economics, etc., as well as political science and history.

f. Through the IC Staff, encourage other elements of the Community to move with despatch in similar directions.

g. Establish an informal Review Committee on "New Methods Projects" to include an Andy Marshall representative; the Chief of O/PR's Analytical Techniques Staff; senior members of OSI, ORD, OER, and OSR; and a senior member of the IC Staff.

h. Meanwhile continue a vigorous, across-the-board program of improving established methodologies, the quality of CIA political analysis, and the fitting of such products' subject matter and formatting to the needs of policy consumers.